

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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SPECIAL ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY

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To: The Secretary

Through: S/S

INR

From: INR - R. Gordon Arneson

Subject: Intelligence Note - Pravda Reaction to Secretary's Berlin
Speech of May 8, 1958

The most interesting aspect of Pravda's generally standard article (May 13) on the Secretary's Berlin speech is that it continues to reflect a certain amount of Soviet sensitivity to Western assertions concerning the atheism of the Soviet leadership.

Beginning with the sarcastic comment that "one might have received the impression that the US Secretary of State had come from some sort of symposium on questions of the Holy Scriptures" and that "he quoted the Bible, expressed his predilection for morality, spiritual freedom, etc.", the paper goes on to reject the contention that the "unbelieving materialism" of the Soviet rulers makes it "allegedly extremely difficult to cooperate with the Soviet Union." Pravda asserts that "cooperation in the interests of...peace must not depend on the religion professed by this or that statesman" and charges that "history has proven that the highflown words of certain Western diplomats, who frequently referred to the Holy Scriptures, have never yet rid mankind of intrigues and crafty designs, disasters or wars." On the other hand, the paper says, history has confirmed that "there is no more honest undertaking...than the words" given by Communist statesmen, though they are, "as is known, atheists."

An earlier comment on the Secretary's speech which was broadcast to Hungary on May 10 had charged that "sometimes Mr. Dulles places so arbitrary a construction on his quotations from Biblical prophets that he is bound to arouse agnosticism in the religious and irony in the agnostic." The broadcast continued with the assertion that the Secretary had "clearly falsified the Epistle of Paul" and that he "is praying morning and evening for victory in a nuclear war, obviously not to God but to the bomb."

Sensitivity to charges that the atheism of the Soviet leaders is the cause of international tension has been evident for several months in Khrushchev's utterances. In his interview with William R. Hearst, Jr. (November 22), his Minsk speech (January 22) and his second letter to Bertrand Russell (March 15), he went out of his way to allege that the religion of "capitalist" statesmen is nothing but a hypocritical mask

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designed to shield preparations of war or the actual launching of aggression whereas Communism, though atheist, is devoted to peace and the betterment of mankind. In a recent speech at a Moscow luncheon for Nasser (May 1), Khrushchev again raised the matter, presumably for the particular benefit of Moslems. "They call us atheists, describe us as people with whom it is impossible to reach agreement and whose words cannot be trusted," he said; "but nevertheless these atheists are the first to set the example of a noble deed, to end unilaterally the tents of the most deadly -- nuclear -- weapon."

Pravda also took up several other points in the Secretary's speech. It sought to refute his statement that the USSR wishes to increase its nuclear weapons stockpiles by referring to past Soviet proposals for banning use and production of nuclear weapons and to the unilateral Soviet test suspension. It denied that Lenin had ever said anything about giving promises "in order to violate them." Charging that "from time to time American propaganda turns to the classics of Marxism-Leninism...for the sole purpose of distorting them," Pravda nevertheless failed specifically to deny existence of the "pie crust" quotation. The paper made the standard charge that the West, in particular the State Department, rather than the USSR is responsible for the division of Germany and again denied that the Soviet Union undertook a pledge at Geneva "with regard to Germany's unification on the basis of free elections." It cited "objective" Western press organs in support of this contention and repeated the standard Soviet position that unification must be the result of agreement between the two parts of Germany.

Like the scattered Soviet comment immediately following the speech, Pravda said that the Secretary said "not a word" about the summit conference. Seemingly echoing some recent private remarks by Khrushchev and Mikoyan which had reflected a certain pessimism about an early summit meeting, the paper stated that "such a meeting must also be desired by...statesmen in the West," that it "can only take place on a reasonable basis" and that the Secretary's Berlin and Durham speeches did not "help the cause of preparing a summit conference."

Pravda concluded with a plea "to all statesmen who correctly understand the significance of the crucial moment we are living through" not to complicate the international situation but to contribute to the relaxation of tension. "This," it said, "fully applies to the US Secretary of State as well."

It is perhaps of interest that neither Pravda nor other Soviet comment on the speech referred to the Secretary's quotation of the 1954 three power guarantee or support for Berlin in case of attack. Moscow has always been reticent on this matter, the 1954 pledge also being ignored in Soviet media. The East German radio did comment on this portion of the speech, describing it as "the obligatory guarantee declaration by the United States for the status quo in West Berlin" which would result in the

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deployment of atomic weapons "on an island in the midst of GDR territory."

In general, Pravda's comment, though sharp, especially on the religious question, did not go to the extremes of invective sometimes present in Soviet material on the Secretary. Its tone and content is essentially similar to the currently steady stream of Soviet output on the Copenhagen meeting in which the Secretary is depicted as "ardently" opposed to a summit conference, to measures of nuclear disarmament and to relaxation of tension and as "ardently" devoted to "the policy of strength" and to "brinkmanship."

A copy of the Moscow Home Service version of the Pravda article is attached to the original of this memorandum. (Tab A) The text of the Secretary's Berlin speech is also attached (Tab B).

An identical memorandum is being sent to the Under Secretary.

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